

7th February 1924]

Salt.

Salt swamp in Tiruturaipundi.

198 Q.—Mr. C. MARUTHAVANAM PILLAI: Will the hon. the Member for Finance and the Member for Revenue be pleased to state—

(1) whether there is a large salt swamp in the southern half of Tiruturaipundi taluk, and, if so, whether the same or a portion thereof is used for manufacturing salt;

(2) whether the sea-water gets into the swamp during summer and whether the loose saline mud is drifted year after year into the cultivated areas of the surrounding villages; and

(3) whether any grievances about the same were at any time represented to the Revenue authorities, during jamabandi time, by the landholders of the affected areas; and if so, what action was taken thereon?

A.—(1) & (2) The following extract from the report of Dr. J. J. L. Ratton written in 1873 gives an account of the phenomenon to which the hon. Member apparently refers:—

“The Vedarniem salt pans are laid out on a large swamp, formed at the base or root of the promontory of Point Calimere, by the action of the Vishagum or storm wave which rises, every year, in May or June, about 2 or 3 feet above the level of ordinary tides and inundates the low ground at the junction of the promontory with the main land.

“This Vishagum wave appears to be a result of the change of wind and sea-current in Palk Strait, which accompanies the outburst of the south-west monsoon. It overruns the whole southern shore of Point Calimere, almost from the point to Adirampatam, a distance of full 40 miles, and settling in the hollow grounds forms a salt swamp of enormous extent. There does not, however, seem to be any sustained elevation of the sea-level along this shore during the monsoon, for at Vedarniem, this year, two or three days after the first appearance of the Vishagum, its waters were in full retreat, and in three weeks' time there was scarcely a vestige of it left.

“The sand and coarse materials carried along in suspension by the Vishagum are deposited first, the clay in fine division being taken to the furthest limit fringing the high ground.”

(3) The Government have no information as to whether the ryots who have extended their cultivations within the range of the Vishagum wave have any grievance in connexion with it. In any case it does not appear that the grievance would be one which it lies within the power of Government to remedy.

The Stella Maris Brine Refining process.

199 Q.—Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR: Will the hon. the Member for Finance be pleased to state whether the Stella Maris Brine Refining process has been tried anywhere in the Madras Presidency by themselves or by any private firm and if so, with what results?

A.—So far as the Government are aware the process has not been tried anywhere in this Presidency on a manufacturing scale.

[7th February 1924]

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—“ From the reply of the hon. the Finance Member, it appears that this process has been tried somewhere in the Presidency on less than a manufacturing scale. What has been the result there ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ Government are not in possession of any information regarding it, except what has appeared in a pamphlet which has received a wide circulation.”

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—“ Is it a fact, as stated in the pamphlet that has been issued, that bullocks' blood and sheep's blood and glue are used in the refinement of salt in England ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ Sir, I am glad to have the opportunity of telling the House that that is one of the pieces of mischievous nonsense which this pamphlet contains. It purports to be a quotation from a book called ‘ Common Commodities and Industries—Salt ’ and the statement about bullocks' blood, sheep's blood and glue, which appears on page 16 of that book, is extracted from an account of the process employed in Saxony in the year of grace 1566, or three and a half centuries ago.”

Mr. J. SALDANHA :—“ Will the Government be pleased to make the experiment themselves ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ Government have made numerous experiments themselves and are confident of their ability to make salt as good as that described in the pamphlet and are ready to put it on sale as soon as anybody will buy it.”

Telegraphs.

Telegraph stations at Rasipur and Atur.

200 Q.—Rao Sahib S. ELLAPPA CHETTIYAR : Will the hon. the Member for Finance be pleased to state—

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been prolonged agitation on the part of the Salem people for opening telegraph stations at Rasipur and Atur, two important taluk headquarters ; and

(b) whether in view of the commercial importance attached to these stations and in view of the representations made in this Council from time to time Government would state how the matter stands at present ?

A.—(a) The hon. Member has called attention to the matter by questions in Council on four occasions.

(b) The inhabitants of Atur were at first unwilling to find the necessary guarantee. The President of the Atur Taluk Voters' Association, however, on the 31st December 1923, advised the Government that they were sending a representation agreeing to the terms proposed. The representation in question has not yet reached the Government. In the case of Rasipur the Postmaster-General has not yet intimated the amount of the guarantee required. It is being reminded.